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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7658
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7625

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: RECENT DISAPPEARANCES RECEIVE WIDE PRESS PLAY

SUMMARY. FRIDAY AND WEEKEND BUENOS AIRES PRESS GAVE UNUSUALLY PROMINENT COVERAGE TO SEVERAL RECENT DISAPPEARANCES. AMONG THESE WERE LEOPANTO E. BIANCHI, A WELL-KNOWN ORTHOPEDIC PHYSICIAN, WHO WAS RELEASED AFTER FOUR DAYS--ACCORDING TO PERSONAL FRIENDS OF BIANCHI'S AFTER BEING HELD BY THE ARMY. TWO OTHERS WERE LAWYERS IN CORDOBA, LUIS REINAUDI AND RAOBERTO YANKILEVICH, SUBSEQUENTLY ANNOUNCED BY THIRD CORPS OF "POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH THOSE SEEKING TO DISTURB ORDER." TWO OTHERS WERE DANIEL BENDERSKY AND MIGUEL SPINELLA, BOTH STUDENTS AT THE FACULTY OF EXACT SCIENCES, WHO HAVE NOT SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN HEARD FROM. END SUMMARY.

1. SEVERAL DISAPPEARANCES RECEIVED WIDE COVERAGE IN THE BUENOS AIRES PRESS THIS PAST WEEKEND, SOME OF IT PUBLISHED FIRST BY THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD THEN PICKED UP BY THE SPANISH LANGUAGE PRESS IN WAYS INDICATING A MUCH GREATER READINESS TO CARRY NEWS OF THIS KIND THAN WE HAD NOTICED BEFORE. THE HERALS HAD ACTUALLY "PIONEERED" THE BENDERSKY CASE BEGINNING THE WEEK BEFORE.

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2. MOST SPECTACULAR AMONG THE DISAPPEARANCE CASES WAS

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REVIEWED BY *[Signature]*

DATE *1/20/82*

RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE

TS AUTH.

REASON(S)

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐

DECLASSIFIED ☒ RELEASABLE ☒

RELEASE DENIED ☐

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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THAT OF DR. LEOPANTO E. BIANCHI, AN ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON WHO WAS ABDUCTED AT MID-DAY ON SEPTEMBER 18 FROM HIS OFFICE AT THE ITALIAN HOSPITAL IN A SCENE THAT INCLUDED PROTESTS BY WAITING PATIENTS AND MEDICAL COLLEAGUES AND SOME ROUGHING UP OF BYSTANDERS. BIANCHI REAPPEARED FOUR DAYS LATER. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY A MEMBER OF THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (PROTECT) THAT BIANCHI LATER TOLD FRIENDS HE WAS INTERROGATED BY THE ARMY. DURING HIS DETENTION, A DOCTOR ATTENDING HIM NOTED THAT "THE ARMY IS JUST." A CANCER PATIENT WHO HAS UNDERGONE THREE OPERATIONS, BIANCHI REPORTED HE WAS NOT TORTURED, BUT THAT PAINKILLERS FOR HIS INTES-TINAL CACER WERE NOT ADMINISTERED.

3. BIANCHI HAS BEEN DESCRIBED TO US BY PERSONS WHO KNOW HIM AS A "MODERATE LEFTIST INTELLECTUAL" WHO BEFORE 1966 WAS ACTIVE IN UNIVERSITY POLITICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES AND WHO FOR SEVERAL MONTHS DURING THE RECENT PERON ADMINISTRATION HAD BEEN THE DEPUTY DEAN OF THE MEDICAL SCHOOL. SECURITY SOURCES CLAIM BIANCHI WAS A MEMBER OF THE ARGENTINE COMMUNIST PARTY. A GOVERNMENT CONTACT SUGGESTED THAT BIANCHI'S ABDUCTION WAS PROBABLY "AN ERROR", AND REMARKED THAT PRESIDENT VIDELA AND SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER BARDI WERE VERY UPSET BY THE DOCTOR'S ABDUCTION, JUST TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CANCER CONGRESS IN BUENOS AIRES.

4. THE BIANCHI ABDUCTION WAS REPORTED ON THE SAME DAY THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF CORDOBA ANNOUNCED THAT TWO LAWYERS OF THAT CITY, LUIS REINAUDI AND ROBERTO YANKILEVICS, HAD BEEN ABDUCTED FROM THEIR HOMES EARLY IN THE MORNING
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OF SEPTEMBER 21. REINAUDI IS A PRACTICING JOURNALIST IN ADDITION TO BEING AN OFFICER OF THE LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATION. THE CORDOBA POLICE STATED THEY HAD NO INFORMATION REGARDING THE ARRESTS. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY THE ARMY THIRD CORPS HEADQUARTERS IN CORDOBA IN A SURPRISINGLY QUICK RESPONSE ANNOUNCED THAT THE TWO MEN WERE AMONG TEN PERSONS DETAINED BECAUSE OF "POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH THOSE SEEKING TO DISTURB ORDER." (NOTE: THIS APPEARS A Milder CHARGE THAT THE OFTEN USED "LINKS WITH SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES.") A HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION SOURCE REPORTS THAT THE TEN PERSONS ARRESTED ARE ALL LOCAL MEMBERS OF THE ARGENTINE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCA).

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5. STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR ARE MIGUEL SPINELLA AND DANIEL EDUARDO BENDERSKY, BOTH STUDENTS AT THE FACULTY OF EXACT SCIENCES AT BUENOS AIRES UNIVERSITY. BENDERSKY WAS TAKEN FROM HIS HOME BY FOUR PERSONS IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS POLICEMEN ON SEPTEMBER 16. BENDERSKY,

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ACCORDING TO HIS FAMILY, HAD LEARNED TWO DAYS BEFORE HIS ABDUCTION THAT APPLICATION FOR A RESEARCH GRANT TO THE NATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION (CNEA) HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN BECAUSE OF DEROGATORY INFORMATION WHICH HAD BEEN DEVELOPED ON HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BY THE STATE INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT. HIS PARENTS REPORTED *TO THE EMBASSY THAT BENDERSKY HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN 1975* FOR PAINTING SLOGANS ON THE WALLS OF THE FACULTY OF EXACT SCIENCES CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF A FELLOW STUDENT. BENDERSKY WAS AN ORGANIST AND SERIOUS STUDENT OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS WHO LIVED WITH HIS PARENTS.

6. MIGUEL SPINELLA, AN ITALIAN CITIZEN BY BIRTH, WAS A SECOND YEAR BIOLOGY STUDENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES, FACULTY OF EXACT SCIENCES. (WE HEAR ITALIAN GOVT. IS TAKING AN INTEREST IN THIS.) SPINELLA WAS SOMETIME ON SEPTEMBER 14 OR 15. ON SEPTEMBER 16, MEN IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS POLICE AGENTS ENTERED HIS APARTMENT AND REMOVED ALL HIS PROPERTY. ACCORDING TO SPINELLA'S FAMILY, HE WAS AN ACTIVE MEMBER IN THE PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO COMUNISTA (PRC) AND WAS A SCHOOL FRIEND OF BENDERSKY.

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7. A BUENOS AIRES HERALD "DISAPPEARANCES" STORY ON SEPTEMBER 23 CONCLUDED BY MENTIONING THAT A MULTI-PARTY

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GROUP OF POLITICAL LEADERS HAD SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT VIDELA ASKING HIM TO DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO FREE THOSE PERSONS BEING HELD UNDER EXECUTIVE DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGES. THE LETTER WAS SIGNED BY PERONIST, RADICAL, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, POPULAR CONSERVATIVES AND PCA POLITICIANS. THE HERALD STORY--PLAYED ALSO LATER IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE PRESS--NOTED THAT RADICAL LEADER RICARDO BALBIN AND MID LEADER FORMER PRESIDENT FRONDISI SIGNATURES WERE NOT ON THE LETTER TO VIDELA. BALBIN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE THOUGHT " THE LETTER WAS INOPPORTUNE."
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